(c) No loan is given directly by the Central Government to ECL. All Government loans are sanctioned to Coal India Limited (CIL). However, unsecured loan of CIL to ECL outstanding as on 31-3-1999 is Rs. 61557.30 lakhs.

Shifting of CIL HO to Ranchi

†2843. SHRI SHIBU SOREN : Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government realize the fact that since of the coal mines are located in the Jharkhand area, the Head Office of Coal India Limited be shifted from Calcutta to Ranchi for better management of these mines;

(b) if so, by when this work is likely to be completed; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS [DR. (SMT.) RITA VERMA] : (a) to (c) At present, therer is no proposal to shift the Headquarters of Coal India Limited (CIL) from Calcutta to Ranchi. As per information received from CIL, of the total number of 498 mines as on 1-4-1999 being operated by Coal India Ltd., 175 are in Jharkhand area (Bihar). In terms of coal production, the percentage of coal produced from the mines in Jharkhand area (Bihar) is about 27% of Coal India's total production during the year 1998-99.

Exploration of Mines and Minerals in NER

2844. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH : Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state :

(a) the steps taken up by Government to explore the mines and minerals in the States of the North-East Region;

(b) when was the survey conducted;

(c) what are the reports of such survey; and

(d) the amount so far spent for exploration of mines and minerals in the North-East Region on State-wise basis ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS [DR. (SMT.) RITA VERMA] : (a) to (c) The Department of Mines, Government of India had constituted a Task Force headed by the

† Original Notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Additional Secretary for evolving an action plan for the proper exploration and development of mineral resources in the North-East region. The Task Force submitted its report in June 1997 suggesting several recommendations for development of the mineral industry in this region. As a part of this effort, the Indian Bureau of Mines has opened a sub-regional office in Guwahati. The IBM has also framed model Minor Mineral Concession Rules for the North-East States and has been collecting samples for testing at the IBM laboratory for beneficiation studies as also giving training facilities to the personnel from the North-East States, free of charge.

The task of surveying for minerals is an on-going process. The Geological Survey of India (GSI) and Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd. (MECL) are engaged in exploring for minerals in the North-East region. At present, the GSI is doing exploration for limestone, galena and dimension stone in Meghalaya and for gold in Arunachal Pradesh. In Addition, search for minor minerals is also being carried out in various parts of Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura under GSI's project : DOVEMAP. MECL has so far completed a total of 12 mineral investigations for gold, limestone, galena and quartzite in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland.

(d) The amount spent by GSI during the last five years for exploration of mines and minerals in the North-East Region on State-wise basis is as under :—

Year	Expenditure in Rupees				
	Assam Division (Hqrs. Guwahati)	Arunachal Pradesh (Hqrs. Itanagar)	Manipur Nagaland Division (Hqrs Dimapur)	Tripura Mizoram Division (Hqrs. Agartala)	Meghalaya (Hqrs Shillong)
1999-2000	128,37,783	100,33,826	56,75,000	73,49,000	874,08,471
1998-1999	112,22,000	88,18,480	54,40,000	61,91,000	76,87,852
1997-1998	81,19,000	76,28,538	45,73,000	53,58,000	657,62,462
1996-1997	65,41,164	58,45,224	38,40,000	39,58,000	497,95,612
1995-1996	58,67,072	54,45,807	36,81,000	39,00,000	405,57,121

MECL has spent a total of Rs. 251.94 lakhs on mineral investigation in the NER. Of this, Rs. 157.95 lakhs was provided by Department of Mines for

investigation for limestone in Siju block of Assam and sillimanite in Sonapahar block of Meghalaya State, and Rs. 94 lakhs was provided by Deptt. of Coal for exploration for coal in Namchik Extension Block in Arunachal Pradesh.

Pension for the Employees/Officers of SECL

†2845. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA : Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the employees/officers working in S.E.C.L. (situated in Madhya Pradesh) have no guarantee to receive pension even after the deductions made from their salaries;

(b) if so, how the crores of rupees deducted from employees salary and deposited with Coal Mines Provident Fund which is in Government account, is being utilized; and

(c) what is the number of those officers/employees who are receiving pension after retirement and the number of those who are not receiving such pensions or are receiving pension payment irregularly ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS [DR. (SMT.) RITA VERMA] : (a) The officers and employees of South Eastern Coalfields Limited (S.E.C.L.) who are eligible members of the Coal Mines Pension Scheme, 1998 are all entitled to get the benefits as admissible under said Scheme.

(b) The Pension Fund is managed by the Coal Mines Provident Fund Organisation (CMPFO) as per investment guidelines issued by the Government of India from time to time.

(c) There are 5408 persons in SECL eligible for pension as on 31-3-2000. As reported by CMPFO, 672 persons as on 31-3-2000 are regularly getting pension in SECL. Claims of remaining eligible persons are under various stages of processing.

Exploration of Gold and Diamonds by MNCs

2846. SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA : Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of multinational companies permitted to explore and mining of gold and diamonds in the country; and

(b) the progress made by them in their exploration so far ?

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† Original Notice of the question was received in Hindi